

CASTLE ROCK

April 1985

The Stephen King Newsletter

ISSUE #4

I've heard the name Richard Bachman more than I care to over the past month and a half, but I can't say it's been dull. From the letters I've received, I take it interested readers are finding THINNER without much trouble, but the other books are harder to come by. A few have been lucky enough to find them for a couple of bucks at used book stores, but the majority had no luck at all. The books are apparently still in print in England, so some have found them through friends or contacts overseas. THINNER is going up the bestsellers lists, and what reviews there have been have been very good. One reader wanted to know who the gentleman on the bookjacket is--is he really named Richard Bachman, or is he someone else. He is a real estate broker from St. Paul, Minnesota, and his name is Richard Manuel. As for where the name Richard Bachman came from, as Steve tells it when the publisher called to ask what pseudonym he wanted to use, a book by Richard Matheson was on his desk and Bachman-Turner Overdrive was playing on the radio, so he chose Richard Bachman. As to whether or not he has any other pseudonyms, except for using the name John Swithen (as mentioned in the trivia in our January issue) for one short story, he has never used any other pseudonyms. Really...Trust me...

As for limited editions...Don Grant tells us there are still some copies of THE TALISMAN limited available (the unsigned edition) at \$65.00 each. The illustrations are wonderful, the book is very well made, and if you missed out on the signed limited, this is a good second choice. The slipjacket and cover are different than the more expensive version, but still very nice. Write to Donald M. Grant, Publisher, Inc., West Kingston, RI 02892 for information...We're told that SKELETON CREW limiteds are still available as well, but running out quickly, so write to Screem Press, Box 8531 Santa Cruz, CA 95061 right away if you are interested. Copies sell for \$75.00 plus \$3.00 postage and handling. For Peter Straub fans, Underwood-Miller has two limiteds available. LEESON PARK AND BELSIZE SQUARE, a collection of poetry is available for \$9.95, and a signed edition for \$30. The book is 74 pages with a foil stamped dust jacket. And BLUE ROSE, a short novel not available anywhere else is available in a signed edition (clothbound with color dust jacket) for \$35. Underwood-Miller also published FEAR ITSELF, a must-have for King readers that we've mentioned before. It was recently released in a trade paperback by NAL. For more information about any of these books, write to Underwood-Miller, 651 Chestnut Street, Columbia, Pennsylvania, 17512. Underwood-Miller also occasionally has copies of THE DARK TOWER for resale, but last we heard they did not. If you are looking for a copy, it can't hurt to inquire, perhaps ask to be put on a waiting list. Another book that might be of interest, as we know there are many out there who not only read Stephen King but Tabitha King as well, is her newest novel, THE TRAP, recently published by McMillan. THE TRAP lists for \$15.95, and if you don't find it in the stores by now, you soon will. A novel about the artist wife of a successful screenwriter trapped by three violent backwoods hoodlums, it's a good read indeed.

Promised last month to let you know where the name CASTLE ROCK came from...Since Castle Rock has been used many times by SK in his works, we felt it was very identified with him. There are several towns in the U.S. called Castle Rock (in Colorado, Washington and Pennsylvania, we've been told), but SK originally got the name from the William Golding book LORD OF THE FLIES, a book that he read as a teenager. He is often asked what book affected him most when he was young and this is the book he always names. In the book, Castle Rock was the name given to an area of the island on which the story unfolds. For inspiration, we here have a photo of the Castle Rock Barbecue and Rose Room over the desk--a gift from Terrie Bagnato!

DOLAN'S CADILLAC

By Stephen King

Part three (of five)

(Synopsis of Parts One and Two: "Dolan slipped," the mousy narrator of this story tells us. "My wife Elizabeth was there, at the wrong place and the wrong time... She got into her car one night and there was dynamite wired to the ignition... He made me a widower--Dolan.")

(Dolan is a Las Vegas hood. The narrator is a third-grade teacher who will not rest until he sees Dolan dead. While following Dolan back from his L.A. residence, a mad idea comes to Elizabeth's obsessed husband. He has considered and rejected creating a false detour in the desert and luring Dolan's silver Cadillac down it, Dolan, he thinks, would smell a rat. But suppose, instead of creating a false detour, he simply took away a real one?

(The narrator embarks upon a grim physical improvement program and sticks out four weeks of gruelling physical labor on a Las Vegas municipal road-crew before being promoted by the foreman, Harvey Blocker, to a slightly easier job: driving a front-end loader.

(The narrator has learned an abbreviation which will be crucial to his plans: RPAV, meaning a repaving job on a major Nevada highway. It is repaving jobs, he knows from his own experience on the Vegas municipal crew, which most frequently cause detours. "Four vectors would have to come together, like a rare conjunction of the planets," he tells us. "Vacation time for me coinciding with one of Dolan's trips...coinciding with a major RPAV on Route 71 coinciding with a national holiday creating a three-day weekend."

(He is aware that such a rare conjunction may never occur, but eventually one does, on the 4th of July weekend. Almost certain that Dolan will leave Vegas for L.A. on Sunday of that weekend, the narrator hurries out to the Route 71 detour on Friday evening, after the road crew has knocked off for the long holiday weekend. He parks his van safely out of sight beyond the detour and prepares to start digging the long funnel-shaped trench he hopes will be Dolan's grave.)

"Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord, I will repay." --Old Testament

12.

The compressor made a racket and the jack-hammer was even worse, but there was no help for it--the best I could hope for was to be done with the first stage of the work before midnight. If it went on much longer than that I was going to be in trouble anyway, because I had only a limited quantity of gasoline for the generator.

Never mind. Don't think of who might be listening and wondering what fool would be running a jackhammer in the middle of the night. Think about the gray Sedan De Ville.

Think about the arc of descent.

I marked off the dimensions of the grave first, using white chalk, the tape measure from my toolbox, and the figures my mathematician friend had worked out. When I was done, a rectangle not quite five feet wide by forty-two feet long glimmered in the dark. At the nearer end it flared wide. In the gloom that flare did not look so much like a funnel as it had on the graph paper where my mathematician friend first sketched it. In the gloom it looked like a gaping mouth at the end of a long straight windpipe. All the better to eat you with, my dear, I thought, and smiled in the dark.

I drew twenty more lines across the box, making stripes two feet wide. Last, I drew a single vertical line down the middle, creating a grid of forty-two near-squares, two feet by two and a half. The forty-third segment was the shovel-shaped flare at the end.

Then I rolled up my sleeves, pulled started the compressor, and went back to square one.

13.

The work went faster than I had any right to hope, but not as fast as I had dared to dream--does it ever? It would have been better if I could have used the heavy equipment, but that would come later. The first thing was to carve up the squares of paving. I was not done by midnight and not by three in the morning, when the compressor ran out of gas. I had anticipated this might happen, and was equipped with a siphon for the van's gas tank. I got as far as unscrewing the gas-cap, but when the smell of the gasoline hit me, I simply screwed the cap back on and lay down flat in the back of the van.

#####

No more, not tonight. I couldn't. My hands were covered with big blisters in spite of the work-gloves I had worn, many of them now weeping. My whole body seemed to vibrate from the steady, punishing beat of the jackhammer, and my arms felt like tuning forks gone mad. My head ached. My teeth ached. My back tormented me; my spine felt as if it had been filled with ground glass.

I had cut my way through twenty-eight squares.

Twenty-eight.

Fourteen to go.

And that was only the start.

Never, I thought. It's impossible. Can't be done.

That cold hand again.

This time it seemed to be on my brow.

Yes, my darling. Yes.

The ringing in my ears was subsiding a little now, every once in awhile I could hear an approaching engine...and then it would subside to a drone on the right as the car turned onto the detour and started around the loop the Highway Department had created to bypass the construction.

Tomorrow was Saturday...sorry, today.

Today was Saturday. Dolan was coming on Sunday. Never. No time.

Yes, my darling.

The blast had torn her to pieces.

My darling had been torn to pieces for telling the truth to the police about what she had seen, for refusing to be intimidated, for being brave, and Dolan was still driving around in his Cadillac and drinking twenty-year-old Scotch while his Rolex glimmered on his wrist.

I'll try, I thought, and then I fell into a dreamless sleep that was like death.

14.

I woke up with the sun, already hot at eight o'clock, shining in my face.

I sat up and screamed, my throbbing hands flying to the small of my back. Work? Cut up another fourteen chunks of asphalt? I couldn't even walk.

But I could walk, and I did.

Moving like a very old man on his way to a shuffleboard game, I worked my way to the glove compartment and opened it, where I had put a bottle of Emprin in case of such a morning after.

Had I thought I was in shape?

Had I really?

Well! That was quite funny, wasn't it?

I took four of the Emprin with cold

water, waited fifteen minutes for them to dissolve in my stomach, and then wolfed a breakfast of dried fruit and cold Pop-Tarts.

I looked over to where the compressor and the jackhammer waited. The yellow skin of the compressor already seemed to sizzle in the morning sunshine. Leading up to it on either side of my incision were the neatly cut squares of asphalt.

I didn't want to go over there and pick up that jackhammer. I thought of Harvey Blocker saying, You ain't never gonna be strong, bubba. Some people and plants take hold in the sun. You dyin. Why you pullin' this crap on your system?

"She was in pieces," I croaked, "I loved her and she was in pieces."

As a cheer it was never going to replace "Go, Bears" or "Hook 'em, horns," but it got me moving. I siphoned gas from the van's tank, gagging at the taste and the stink, holding onto my breakfast only by a grim act of will. I wondered briefly what I was going to do if the road-crew had drained the diesel from their machines before going home for the long weekend, and quickly shoved the thought out of my mind. It made no sense to worry over things I couldn't control. More and more I felt like a man who has jumped out of the bay of a B-52 with a parasol in his hand instead of a parachute on his back.

I carried the gasoline can over to the compressor and poured it into the tank. I had to use my left hand to curl the fingers of my right around the handle of the compressor's starter-cord. When I pulled, more blisters broke, and as the generator started up, I saw thick pus dripping out of my fist.

Never make it.

Please, darling.

Eight-thirty now. I had twenty-seven hours.

I walked over to the jackhammer and started in again.

15.

The first hour was the worst, and then the steady pounding of the jackhammer combined with the Emprin seemed to numb everything--my back, my hands, my head. I finished cutting out the last block of asphalt by eleven. It was time to see how much I remembered of what Tinker, the big black bucket-loader operator on Blocker's crew, had told me about jumpstarting road equipment.

I went staggering and flapping back to

#####

 my van and drove a mile and a half down the road to where the road construction was going on. I saw my machine almost at once: a big Case-Jordan bucket-loader with a grapple-and-pincers attachment on the back. \$55,000 worth of rolling stock. I had driven a Caterpillar loader for Blocker, but this one would be pretty much the same.

I hoped.

I climbed up into the cab and looked at the diagram printed on the head of the stick-shift. It looked just the same as the one on my Cat. I ran the pattern once or twice. There was some resistance at first because some grit had found its way into the gearbox--the guy who drove this baby hadn't put down his sand-flaps and his foreman hadn't checked him. Blocker would have checked. And docked the driver five bucks, long weekend or not.

His eyes. His half-admiring, half-contemptuous eyes. What would he think of an errand such as this?

Never mind. This was no time to be thinking of Harvey Blocker, this was a time to be thinking of Elizabeth. And Dolan.

There was a piece of burlap on the steel floor of the cab. I lifted it, looking for the key. There was no key there, of course.

Tink's voice in my mind: Shit, a kid could jump-start one of these babies, whitebread. Ain't nothin' to it. At least a car's got a ignition lock on it--new ones do, anyway. Look here. No, not where the key goes, you ain't got no key, why you want to look' where the key goes? Look under here. See these wires hangin' down?

I looked now and saw the wires hanging down, looking just as they had when Tinker pointed them out to me: red, blue, yellow, and green. I pared the insulation wire from an inch of each and then took a twist of copper wire from my back pocket.

Okay, whitebread, lissen up 'cause we maybe goan have Q and A later, you dig me? You gonna wire the red and the green. You won't forget that, 'cause it's like Christmas. That takes care of your ignition.

I used my wire to hold the bare places on the red and green wires of the Case-Jordan's ignition together. The desert wind hooted, thin, like the sound of someone blowing over the top of a soda bottle. Sweat ran down my neck and into my shirt, where it caught and tickled.

Now you just got the blue and the yellow. You ain't gonna wire 'em, you just gonna touch 'em together, and you gonna make sho you ain't touchin no bare wire witcher own self when you do it neither, 'less you wanna make some hot electrified water in your Jockies, m'man. The

blue and the yellow ones turn the starter. Off you go. When you feel like you had enough of a joyride, you just pull the red and green wires apart. Like turnin' off the key you don't have.

I touched the blue and yellow wires together. A big yellow spark jumped up and I recoiled, striking the back of my head on one of the metal posts at the rear of the cab. Then I leaned forward and touched them together again. The motor turned over, coughed, and the bucketloader took a sudden spasmodic lurch forward. I was thrown into the rudimentary dashboard, the left side of my face striking the steering bar. I had forgotten to put the damned transmission in neutral and had almost lost an eye as a result. I could almost hear Tink laughing.

I fixed that and then tried the wires again. The motor turned over and turned over. It coughed once, puffing a dirty brown smoke signal into the air to be torn away by the ceaseless wind, and then the motor just went on cranking. I kept trying to tell myself the machine was just in rough shape--a man who'd go off without putting the sand-flaps down, after all, was apt to forget anything--but I became more and more sure that they had drained the diesel, just as I had feared.

And then, just as I was about to give up and look for something I could use to dipstick the loader's fuel tank (all the better to read the bad news with, my dear), the motor bellowed into life.

I let the wires go--the bare patch on the blue one was smoking--and goosed the throttle. When it was running smoothly, I geared it into first, swung it around, and started back toward the long brown rectangle cut neatly into the westbound lane of the highway.

16.

The rest of the day was a long hell of the roaring engine and the blazing sun. The driver of the Case-Jordan had forgotten to mount his sand-flaps, but for some reason he had taken his sun umbrella. Well, the old gods laugh sometimes, I guess. No reason why. They just do. I guess the old gods must have one fuck of a sense of humor.

It was almost two o'clock before I got all of the asphalt chunks down into the ditch, because I had never achieved any real degree of delicacy with the pincers. And with the spade-shaped piece at the end, I had to cut it in two and then drag each of

#####

 the chunks down into the ditch by hand. I was afraid that if I used the pincers I would break them.

When all the pieces were down in the ditch, I drove the bucket-loader back down to the road equipment. I was getting low on fuel; it was time to siphon. I stopped at the van, got the hose...and found myself staring, hypnotized, at the big jerrican of water. I tossed the siphon away for the time being and crawled into the back of the van. I poured water over my face and neck and chest and screamed with pleasure. I knew that if I drank I would vomit, but I had to drink. So I did and I vomited, not getting up to do it but only turning my head to one side and then crab-crawling as far away from the mess as I could.

Then I slept and when I woke up it was nearly dusk and somewhere a wolf was howling at a new moon rising in the purple sky.

17.

In the dying light the cut I had made really did look like a grave--the grave of some mythical ogre. Goliath, maybe.

Never, I told the long hole in the asphalt. Please, Elizabeth whispered back. Please... for me.

I got four more Emprin out of the glove-compartment and swallowed them down.

"I'll try," I said. "For you."

18.

I parked the Case-Jordan bucket-loader with its fuel-tank close to the tank of a bulldozer, and used a crowbar to pry off the caps on both. A 'dozer-jockey on a state crew might get away with forgetting to drop the sand-flaps on his vehicle, but with forgetting to lock the fuel-cap, in these days of \$1.05 diesel? Never.

I got the fuel running from the 'dozer into my loader and waited, trying not to think, watching the moon rise higher and higher in the sky. After awhile I drove back to the cut in the asphalt and started to dig.

Running a bucket-loader by moonlight was a lot easier than running a jackhammer under the broiling desert sun, but it was still slow work because I was determined that the floor of my excavation should have exactly the right slant. As a consequence, I consulted the carpenter's level I had brought with me frequently. That meant stopping the loader, getting down, measuring, and climbing back up into the seat again. No problem ordinarily, but by midnight my body had stiffened up and every movement

#####

sent a shriek of pain through my bones and muscles. My back was the worst; I began to fear I had done something fairly unpleasant to it.

But that--like everything else--was something I would have to worry about later.

If a hole five feet deep as well as forty-two feet long and five feet wide had been required, it really would have been impossible, of course, bucket-loader or not--I might just as well have planned to send him into outer space, or drop the Taj Mahal on him. The total yield on such dimensions is over a thousand cubic feet of earth.

"You've got to create a funnel shape that will suck your bad aliens in," my mathematician friend said, "and then you've got to create an inclined plane that pretty much mimes the arc of descent."

He drew one on another sheet of graph paper.

"That means that your intergalactic rebels or whatever they are only need to remove half as much earth as the figures initially show. In this case--" He scribbled on a work-sheet, and beamed. "Five hundred and twenty-five cubic feet. Chickenfeed. One man could do it."

I had believed so too, once upon a time, but I had no reckoned on the heat...the blisters...the exhaustion...the steady pain in my back.

Stop for a minute, but not for too long. Measure the slant of the trench.

It's not as bad as you thought, is it, darling? At least it's a roadbed, not desert hardpan--

I moved more slowly along the length of the grave as the hole got deeper. My hands were bleeding now as I worked the controls. Ram the drop-lever all the way forward until the bucket lay on the ground. Pull back on the drop-lever and shove the one that extended the armature with a high hydraulic whine. Watch as the bright oiled metal slid out of the dirty orange casing, pushing the bucket into the dirt. Every now and then a spark would flash as the bucket slid over a piece of flint. Now raise the bucket...swivel it, a dark oblong shape against the stars (and try to ignore the steady throbbing pain in your back)...and dump it down in the ditch, covering the chunks of asphalt already there.

Never mind, darling--you can bandage your hands when it's done. When he's done.

"She was in pieces," I croaked, and jockeyed the bucket back into place so I could take another two hundred pounds of dirt and gravel out of Dolan's grave.

How time flies when you are having a good time.

19.

Moments after I had noticed the first faint streaks of light in the east I got down to take another measurement of the floor's incline with the carpenter's level. I was actually getting near the end; I thought I might just make it. I knealt, and as I did I felt something in my back let go. It went with a dull little snap.

I uttered a guttural cry and collapses on my side on the narrow, slanted floor of the excavation, lips pulled back from my teeth, hands pressing into the small of my back.

Little by little the very worst of the pain passed and I was able to get to my feet.

All right. That's it. It's over. It was a good try, but it's over.

Please, darling, Elizabeth whispered back-- impossible as it would have been to believe once upon a time, that whispering voice had begun to take on unpleasant undertones in my mind; there was a sense of monstrous implacability about it. Please, don't give up. Please--go on.

Go on digging? I don't even know if I can walk!

But there's so little left to do! the voice wailed--it was no longer just a voice that spoke for Elizabeth, if it had ever been; it was Elizabeth. So little left, darling!

I looked a my excavation in the growing light and gaped stupidly. She was right. The bucket-loader was five feet from the end; seven, at the most.

The deepest five. Or seven.

You can do it, darling--I know you can. Softly cajoling.

But it was not the voice that persuaded me that I could. What did that was an image of Dolan lying asleep in his penthouse while I stood here in this hole beside a stinking, rumbling bucket-loader, covered with dirt, my hands in flaps and ruins. Dolan sleeping in silk pajamas with one of his blondes sleeping likewise beside him.

Downstairs, in the parking garage, the Cadillac, already loaded with luggage, would be gassed and ready to go.

"All right, then," I said. I climbed slowly back into the bucket-loader's seat and began to run the controls again.

20.

I kept on until nine o'clock and then I quit--there were other things to do, and I was running out of time. My angled hole was forty

feet long. It would have to be enough.

I drove the bucket loader back to its original spot and parked it. I would need it again, and that would mean siphoning more gas, but there was no time for that now. I wanted more Emprin, but there weren't many left in the bottle and I would need them all later today...and tomorrow. Oh, yes, tomorrow--the glorious Forth.

I rested for fifteen minutes instead. I could till afford the time, but I forced myself to take it. I lay on my back in the van, my muscles jumping and twitching, imagining Dolan.

He would be packing a few last-minute items in a travel-all now--some papers to look over, a toilet kit, maybe a paperback book or a deck of cards.

Suppose he flies this time? a malicious voice deep inside whispered, and I couldn't help it--a moan escaped me. He had never flown to L.A. before--always it had been the Cadillac. I had an idea he didn't like to fly. But still...the thought lingered.

21.

It was nine-thirty when I took out the roll of canvas and the big industrial stapler and the wooden struts. The day was overcast and a little cooler--God sometimes grants a favor. Up until then I'd forgotten my bald head in consideration of larger agonies, but now, when I touched it with my fingers, I drew them away with a little hiss of pain. I looked at it in the outside passenger mirror and saw that it was a deep, angry red--almost a plum color.

Back in Vegas Dolan would be making last-minute phone calls. His driver would be bringing the Cadillac around front. Then, only seventy miles between him and me, and the Caddy doing sixty miles an hour. No time to moon around looking at my stupid bald head.

I love your bald head, dear, Elizabeth said beside me.

"Thank you, Beth," I said, and began taking the struts over to the hole.

22.

The work was now light compared to the digging I'd done earlier, and the almost unbearable agony in my back subsided to a steady dull throb.

But what about later? that insinuating voice asked. What about later, hmmm?

#####

#####

Later would have to take care of itself, that was all. It was beginning to look as if the trap was going to be ready, and that was the important thing.

The struts were just enough longer than the width of the hole to allow me to seat them tightly in the sides of the asphalt which formed the top layer of my excavation. This was a job that would have been tougher at night, when the asphalt was hard, but now, at mid-morning, the stuff was sludgy-pliable, and it was like sticking pencils in wads of cooling taffy.

When I had the struts in, the hole had taken on the look of my original chalk diagram, minus the line down the middle. I positioned the heavy roll of canvas next to the shallow end of the hole and removed the hanks of rope that had tied it shut.

Then I unrolled forty-two feet of Route 71.

Close up, the illusion was not perfect--as stage make-up and set-decoration is never perfect from the first three rows. But from even a few feet away, it was virtually undetectable. It was a dark gray strip which matched the actual surface of Route 71 exactly. On the far left of the canvas strip (as you faced west) was a broken yellow passing line. I had even guessed right about that.

I settled the long strip of canvas over the struts, then went slowly along the length of it, stapling the canvas to the struts. My hands didn't want to do the work but I coaxed them.

With the canvas strip secured, I went back to the van, slid behind the wheel (sitting down caused another brief but agonizing back-spasm), and drove back to the top of the rise. I sat there for a full minute, looking down at my lumpy, wounded hands as they lay in my lap. Then I got out and looked back down Route 71, almost casually--I didn't want to focus on any one thing. I wanted the whole picture--a gestalt, if you will. I wanted, as much as possible, to see the scene as Dolan and his men were going to see it when they came over the rise. I wanted to get an idea of how right--or how wrong--it was going to feel to them.

What I saw looked better than I could have hoped.

The road machinery at the far end of the straight stretch justified the piles of dirt that had come from my excavation. The asphalt chunks in the ditch were mostly buried. Some still showed--the wind was picked up, and it had blown the dirt around--but that looked like the remnants of an old paving job. The

compressor I'd brought in the back of the van looked like Highway Department equipment.

And from here the illusion of the canvas strip was perfect--Route 71 appeared, down there, at least, utterly untouched.

23.

Traffic had been heavy Friday and fairly heavy on Saturday--the drone of motors heading into the detour loop had been almost constant.

This morning there was hardly any traffic at all, most people had gotten to wherever they intended to spend the Fourth, or were taking the Interstate forty miles south to get there. That was fine with me.

I parked the van just out of sight over the brow of the rise and lay on my belly until ten-forty-five. Then, after a big milk-truck had gone lumbering slowly up the detour, I back the van down, opened the rear doors, and threw all the road cones inside.

The flashing arrow was a tougher proposition because I could not see at first how I was going to unhook it from the locked battery box without electrocuting myself. Then I saw how the cable running between the two plugged into the arrow--the plug was hard to see at first because it had been protected with a hard rubber O-ring to keep vandals or practical jokers from pulling the plug.

I found a hammer and chisel in my toolbox, and four hard blows were sufficient to split the O-ring. I yanked it off with a pair of pliers and pulled the cable free. The arrow stopped flashing and went dark. I pushed the battery box into the ditch and buried it. It was strange to stand there and hear it humming down there in the sand. But it made me think of Dolan, and that made me laugh.

I didn't think Dolan would hum.

He might scream, but I didn't think he would hum.

Four bolts held the arrow in a low steel cradle. I loosened them as fast as I could, ears cocked for another motor. It was time for one--but not time for Dolan yet, surely.

That got the interior pessimist going again.

What if he flew?

He doesn't like to fly.

What if he's driving but going another way? Going by the interstate, for instance?

He always goes by 71.

#####

Yes, but what if--

"Shut up," I hissed. "Shut up, damn you, just shut the fuck up!"

Easy, darling--easy! Everything will be all right.

I got the arrow into the back of the van. It crashed against the sidewall and some of the bulbs broke. More of them broke when I tossed in the cradle after it.

Now I drove back up the rise, pausing to look down on the scene. I had taken away the arrow and the cones, all that remained now was that big orange warning: ROAD CLOSED... USE DETOUR!

There was a car coming. It occurred to me that if Dolan was early it had all been for nothing--the goon driving would simply turn down the detour, leaving me to go mad out here in the desert.

It was an old Buick.

My heart slowed down and I let out a long, shuddering breath. But there was no more time for nerves.

I drove back to where I had parked to look at my camouflage job and parked there again. I reached under the jumble of stuff in the back of the van and got the jack. Grimly ignoring my screaming back, I jacked up the rear end of the van, loosened the lug-nuts on the back tire they would see when

(if)

they came, and tossed it into the back of the van. More glass broke, and I would just have to hope there had been no damage done to the tire. I didn't have a spare.

I went back to the front of the van, got my old binoculars, and then headed back toward the detour. I passed it and got to the top of the next rise as fast as I could--a shambling trot was really all I could manage by this time.

Once at the top, I trained my binoculars east.

I had a three-mile field of vision, and could see snatches of the road for two miles east of that. I could see four vehicles currently on the way, strung out at a wide distance. The first was a foreign car, Datsun or Subaru, I thought, less than a mile away. Beyond that was a pick-up, and beyond the pick-up was what looked like a Mustang. The others were just desert-light flashing on chrome and glass.

When the first car neared--it was a Subaru--I stood up and stuck my thumb out. I didn't expect a ride looking the way I did, and I wasn't disappointed. The expensively coiffed woman behind the wheel took one horrified glance and then her face snapped shut like a fist and she was gone, down the hill

and onto the detour.

"Get a bath, buddy!" the driver of the pick-up yelled at me half a minute later.

It was an Escort rather than a Mustang.

The Escort was followed by a Plymouth, the Plymouth by a Winnebago that sounded as if it were full of kids having a pillow-fight.

No sign of Dolan.

I looked at my watch. 11:25 now. If he was going to show up, it ought to be very soon. This was prime time.

The hands on my watch moved slowly around to 11:40 and there was still no sign of him. Only a late-model Chevrolet and a hearse as black as a rain-cloud in the overcast noon-light.

He's not coming. He went by the Interstate. Or he flew.

That's not true.

Yes it is. You were afraid he'd smell you, and he did. That's why he changed his pattern.

There was another twinkle of light on chrome in the distance. This car was a big one. Big enough to be a Cadillac.

I lay on my belly, elbows propped in the grit of the shoulder, binoculars to my eyes. The car disappeared behind a rise...re-emerged...slipped around a curve...and then came out again.

It was a Cadillac, all right, but it wasn't gray--it was a mint green.

What followed was the most agonizing thirty seconds of my life: thirty seconds that seemed to last for thirty years. Part of me decided on the spot, completely and irrevocably, that Dolan had traded in his old Cadillac for a new one. Certainly he had done this before, and although he had never traded for a green one before, there was certainly no law against it.

The other half argued just as completely and irrevocably that Cadillacs were almost a dime a dozen on the highways and byways between Vegas and L.A., and the odds against the green Caddy being Dolan's Cadillac were a hundred to one.

Sweat ran into my eyes, blurring them, and I put the binoculars down. They weren't going to help me solve this one, anyhow. By the time I was able to see the passengers, it would be too late.

It's almost too late! Go down there and dump the detour sign! You're going to miss him!

Let me tell you what you're going to catch in your trap if you hide that sign now: two rich old people going to L.A. to see their children and take their grandkids to Disneyland.

Do it! It's him! It's the only chance

 you're going to have!

That's right. The only chance. So don't
 blow it by catching the wrong people.

It's Dolan!

It's not!

"Stop it," I moaned, holding my head.

"Stop it, stop it."

I could hear the motor now.

Dolan.

The old people.

The lady.

The tiger.

Dolan.

The old--

"Elizabeth, help me!" I groaned.

Darling, that man has never owned a green
 Cadillac in his life. He never would. Of
 course it's not him.

The pain in my head cleared away. I was
 able to get to my feet and get my thumb out.

It wasn't the old people.

It was what looked like twelve Vegas
 chorines crowded it with one old boy who was
 wearing the biggest cowboy hat and the darkest
 Foster Grants I had ever seen. One of the
 chorines mooned me as the green Cadillac swept
 by me and went fishtailing onto the detour.

#####

Slowly, feeling entirely washed out, I
 raised the binoculars again.

And saw him coming

There was no mistaking that Cadillac as
 it came around the curve at the far end of my
 uninterrupted view of the road--it was as gray
 as the sky overhead, but it stood out with
 startling clarity against the dull brown rises
 of land to the east.

It was him--Dolan. My Gethsemene of doubt
 and indecision seemed both remote and foolish
 in an instant. It was Dolan, and I didn't
 have to see that gray Cadillac to know it.

I didn't know if he could smell me, but
 I could smell him.

(To be continued)

#####

*
 * The last section of SHINING AT THE OVERLOOK
 * by Terrie Bagnato will be continued next
 * month. DOLAN'S CADILLAC ran long this time,
 * so we didn't have room this month, but never
 * fear, you'll get to hear the rest of the
 * saga next month. Apologies to Terrie...
 *
 *



Bangor's lot

* TRIVIA...

* contributed by reader
 * Jerad Walters

* Be the first to answer
 * these questions about
 * SALEM'S LOT correctly and
 * win a CASTLE ROCK t-shirt
 * and a paperback copy of
 * FEAR ITSELF!

- * 1. What are the three
 * books published by Ben
 * Mears?
- * 2. What is the name of
 * the cemetery on Burns Rd?
- * 3. Who is Salem's Lot's
 * dump custodian?
- * 4. What was Matt's nick-
 * name for Jimmy Cody?

* Send your answers on a
 * postcard to Castle Rock,
 * Trivia Contest, Box 8183,
 * Bangor, ME 04401. If you
 * have trivia questions you
 * think are stumpers, send
 * them in! If we use your
 * questions, you'll receive
 * the same prize as the
 * winner.

 The cartoon above, originally published in the Bangor Daily News, is also contained in
 HERE TODAY (Bangor Publishing, 1983), a collection of cartoons by Vic Runtz.

 Word from Starmont House, the company that published Doug Winter's book Stephen King/Starmont Reader's Guide#16 in 1982, announcing the forthcoming publication of four critical volumes on the life and works of Stephen King. The four books will be published in May and June and will be in both hardcover (\$17.95 each) and paperback (\$9.95 each). The titles and authors are as follows: Discovering Stephen King, edited by Darrell Schweitzer (a collection of essays on his work), Stephen King as Richard Bachman, by Michael Collings (a book-length study of his "hidden" works), The Shorter Works of Stephen King by Michael Collings & David Engebretson, (resumes and analyses of his short stories and novellas), and The Reader's Guide to Stephen King, by Michael Collings (a brand-new version of the SK guide in the Starmont series). Order now directly from the publisher at the address that follows, or send SASE to CASTLE ROCK for order form. Starmont House, Inc., P.O. Box 851, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

 CLASSIFIEDS...

WANTED: first editions of NIGHT SHIFT and SALEM'S LOT. Please state price (hopefully reasonable) and condition. Mike Lefebvre, C/O 9386 Katella Avenue, Anaheim, California, 92804

 A company called Recorded Books offers the following works by Stephen King on audio cassettes: Rita Hayworth & Shawshank Redemption, Apt Pupil, The Breathing Method, and The Body. Prices vary from \$5.95 to \$8.95 for a 30-day rental or, if you purchase the cassettes, from \$14.95 to \$19.95 depending on which novella you choose. Write to Recorded Books, Inc., 6306 Aaron Lane, Clinton, MD 20735 for a catalog, or call their toll-free number 1-800-638-1304 for info. Many of SK's books are also available in large-print--inquire at your local bookstore.

 Stephen King was "lampooned" in the May issue of National Lampoon. If you pick up the magazine, you'll find a piece called "Eggboiler" purportedly written by Stephen King. But this one won't go in his bibliography, even though it has his byline on it! A take-off on Firestarter, heavily laced with elements from other King works, it has its funny moments, but it could have been funnier. Much of it had been done before, and better. Fortunately, SK has a healthy sense of humor! In the future we'll be publishing a "roast" of SK done a few years back by some familiar characters...

The Talisman by Stephen King and Peter Straub has been voted best novel of 1984 by the readers of The Twilight Zone Magazine. The award will be present at an awards ceremony in May...

 If you are a careful reader (and a candy eater), when reading The Stand you may have noticed (if you read the Doubleday hardcover) that one of the characters, Harold Lauder, was supposed to have left a chocolate fingerprint on a diary after sneaking a peek at it. Anyone who has ever munched a Payday knew immediately that they do not contain chocolate, and a good many such folks wrote to SK, some even sending Paydays along with their letter. SK changed the candy bar to a Milky Way for the subsequent paperback editions. But it turns out SK is more of a visionary than anyone suspected. Paydays DO now contain chocolate--at least Payday now comes in chocolate as well as the original flavor. I've tried them both, and I prefer the original. SK is now tempted to return the original candy bar to Harold! I personally hope the matter is now at rest! The Payday experience proved that there are many very careful readers, and it seems that with every book there's at least one minor detail that is wrong and letter after letter arrives to point it out. Some readers suspect he does it on purpose to see if they're awake!

 LATE CLASSIFIED...

DESPERATELY WANTED: Lts. Ed. Hardcover, fine cond, EYES OF THE DRAGON, CHRISTINE, CUJO, FIRESTARTER, DANSE MACABRE, Call (203) 372-2164, ask for Bev or leave message with Castle Rock.

Castle Rock is published monthly by Stephanie Leonard. Subscription price is \$12 per year, and checks should be made payable to CASTLE ROCK. Please specify what issue you would like to start with--back issues are available. All material is copyright © 1985 by Stephanie Leonard unless otherwise indicated. Submissions are welcome, but we cannot return them unless they are accompanied by return postage. A sample first issue is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Castle Rock, P.O. Box 8183, Bangor, ME 04401

* Two must-have magazines: FANGORIA #43
 * (March 1985) for the second part of
 * the King/Straub interview & info on
 * CAT'S EYE and CINEFANTASTIQUE Vol.
 * 15, No. 2 (MAY 1985) for articles on
 * CAT'S EYE and SILVER BULLET and a
 * report on SK at the Third Annual
 * Drive-in Movie Festival...As Joe-Bob
 * would say, check it out.